

6 - THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF PERGAMOS (REVELATION 2:12-17)



I. Destination (Revelation 2:12)

A. The Recipient (Revelation 2:12a)

- Christ addressed the pastor of the church in Pergamos.

Historical Note: Pergamos

Pergamos was a rich and powerful ancient Greek city. It was briefly the capital of the Roman province of Asia in Asia Minor, before the capital was transferred to Ephesus. Pergamos reached the height of its greatness under Roman rule and was home to about 200,000 inhabitants. It was a wicked city. People in its pagan cults worshiped Athena, Asclepius, Dionysus, and Zeus. Pergamos was famous for its university with a library of about 200,000 volumes, and for manufacturing parchment resulting in a paper called pergamena.

B. The Description of Christ (Revelation 2:12b)

- Christ describes himself as having a sharp two-edged sword
- The sword is a symbolic representation of the Word of God.
- It has the ability to separate believers from the world

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- It has the ability to condemn the world for its sin.

II. Commendation (Revelation 2:13)

A. Christ's Knowledge of the Church (Revelation 2:13a)

- Christ has an intimate knowledge of the church.

B. Christ Commends Them (Revelation 2:13b-d)

1. Their Difficult Situation

- Christ is aware that they living where Satan was worshiped.

Biblical Note: Satan's Throne

Satan's Throne may refer to the great temple of Asclepius, a pagan god of healing. This pagan god was represented in the form of a serpent.

2. They were True

- Christ knew that they remained true in spite of persecution.

3. They Suffered Martyrdom

- Christ knew that some had suffered martyrdom for their faith.

Historical Note: Antipas

Antipas was an early Christian martyr in Pergamos. He was described as a faithful witness of Jesus Christ. Nothing is known of his martyrdom. Nothing else is known about Antipas.

III. Rebuke (Revelation 2:14-15)

A. The Doctrine of Balaam (Revelation 2:14)

- They were allowing compromise in their morality.

Historical Note: Balaam

Balaam was Gentile diviner. He was the son Beor from the city of Pethor on the Euphrates River. He was hired by Balak, king of Moab, to curse Israel. However, he pronounced three blessings on Israel as he was commanded to do by the Lord. Balaam was guilty of counseling King Balak to cause Israel to sin through idolatry and intermarriage with Balak's people. Balak will killed when Israel defeated the Midianites.

See: Numbers 22:5-41; 23:1-30; 24:25; 31:8,16; Deuteronomy 23:4-5; Joshua 13:22; 24:9-10; Nehemiah 13:2; Micah 6:6; 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11; Revelation 2:14.

Historical Note: Barak

Balak was a king of Moab who hired Balaam to pronounce a curse upon the children of Israel. He

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was frightened by the news of Israel's victory over the Amorite kings, Sihon and Og. He thought that God's favor could be turned from Israel to his own nation. He heeded Balaam's advice to seduce the people of Israel with idolatry and sexual immorality.
See: Numbers 22:1-41; 23:1-30; 24:10-25; Joshua 24:9-10; Judges 11:25; Micah 6:5; Revelation 2:14.

Scripture: Numbers 25:1-13; 31:1:16

B. Doctrine of the Nicolaitans (Revelation 2:15)

- They were allowing compromise in their faith.

IV. Exhortation (Revelation 2:16)

A. Repent (Revelation 2:16a)

- Christ calls them to acknowledge and turn from their sin.

B. Fight against you (Revelation 2:16b)

- Christ will judge them soon with His Word.

V. Promise (Revelation 2:17)

A. The exhortation (Revelation 2:17a)

- We are called to acknowledge what the Holy Spirit reveals to us.

B. Hidden Manna (Revelation 2:17b)

- You will receive the blessings and benefits of knowing Christ, the Bread of Life.

Biblical Note: Hidden Manna

Hidden Manna refers to spiritual nourishment that believers will receive. The hidden manna symbolizes the promises and blessings that will come with the Messiah, Jesus Christ the Living Bread.

C. A White Stone (Revelation 2:17c)

- You will receive a “new name” and acceptance by God.

Biblical Note: White Stone

In Roman culture, the White Stone refers the custom of awarding white stones to the victors in athletic contests. A white stone with the athlete's name served as his ticket to the special banquet honoring the victors.